



**(U//FOUO) Rodehouse: SID's Offsite Language Processing Center
(Part I)**

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(U//FOUO) Note from SIGINT Communications: This is the first in a two-part article. The conclusion will appear to morrow.

(TS//SI) What happens when NSA suddenly needs to find more linguists to process a certain language? It takes a long time to train a person in a language, and hiring native speakers has its own difficulty: sometimes these linguists are not fully cleared. The Agency has faced this problem a number of times over the years. The solution? To house these not-fully-cleared linguists in a separate facility where appropriate security procedures can be put in place. Let's take a look at how this idea has evolved...

(U) The Cold War

(TS//SI) Does the coverterm CLOISTER mean anything to you? If you began work at NSA after 1980, probably not. But in the 60's and 70's NSA had a language center in College Park, staffed by contractor native speakers of Russian and Eastern European languages who worked under the supervision of government managers. Language materials traveled up and down the Baltimore Washington Parkway by secure courier, as these linguists churned out thousands of transcripts in support of former A Group targets.

(U) Somalia

(TS//SI) Fast forward to 1993 and the crisis in Somali. During Operation Restore Hope, the company BDM had an in-country contract with the Army to provide Somali language support. As U.S. troops withdrew from Somalia, NSA contracted with BDM to employ Somali linguists here in Maryland to transcribe intercept from a remote collection package, thus giving rise to the urban legend of D.C taxi cab driver doing SIGINT. Because of their ties to their homeland, it was not possible to fully clear these linguists quickly and bring them into NSA spaces. So a facility for the linguists was opened in Columbia, Md., where they worked along with Army analysts and reporters until 1995.

(U) Haiti and the Balkans

(TS//SI) The Haitian crisis of 1994 employed a similar model, using less-than-fully cleared native speakers at the offsite facility. In 1995, a Serbo-Croatian mission was established at the facility in support of the Balkans. This mission, however, differed significantly from the previous two. Instead of transcribing from a single collector, the linguists worked as extensions of the target offices, transcribing material from national collectors. In 1998, an Albanian mission was added to the facility. At this point, the contract changed from BDM to PSC and moved from Columbia to a small office in the Airport Square complex. Only the Balkans missions remained. Then came 9/11.

(U//FOUO) Coming in part two: Rodehouse since 9/11 and future opportunities.

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